

was informed of it the Viceroy, certain that he should soon have to engage with the Neapolitans, was obliged to renounce the preservation of the line of the Adige, the Neapolitan army being in the rear of his right wing. He accordingly ordered a retrograde movement to the other side of the Mincio, where his army was cantoned. In this position, Prince Eugene, on the 8th of February, had to engage with the Austrians, who had come up with him, and the victory of the Mincio arrested, for some time, the invasion of the Austrian army and its junction with the Neapolitan troops.

It was not until eight days after that Murat officially declared war against the Emperor; and immediately several general and superior officers, and many French troops who were in his service abandoned him, and repaired to the headquarters of the Viceroy. Murat made endeavors to detain them; they replied, that as he had declared war against France, no Frenchman who loved his country could remain in his service. "Do you think," returned he, "that my heart is less French than yours? On the contrary, I am much to be pitied. I hear of nothing but the disasters of the Grand Army. I have been obliged to enter into a treaty with the Austrians, and an arrangement with the English, commanded by Lord Bentinck, in order to save my kingdom from a threatened landing of the English and the Sicilians, which would infallibly have excited an insurrection."

There could not be a more ingenuous confession of the antipathy which Joachim knew the Neapolitans to entertain towards his person and government.<sup>1</sup> His address to the French was ineffectual. It was easy to foresee what would ensue. The Viceroy soon received an official communication from Napoleon's War Minister, accompanied by an Imperial decree, recalling all the French who were in the service of Joachim, and declaring that all who were taken

XVIII that Murat should be overthrown. See Talleyrand's *Correspondence*, vol. ii. pp. 22, 38, 46, 86, and 135, remembering always the old affection of Metternich for Caroline Bonaparte, wife of Murat.

<sup>1</sup> This is not quite correct; the Neapolitans, as a mass, did not entertain an antipathy toward Murat. - *Editor of 1836 edition.*